

## Supporting Future Educators Act

To support the preparation and retention of outstanding educators in all fields and help to ensure a bright future for children in our nation's under-resourced, underserved communities.

The **Supporting Future Educators Act** will:

1. Create a Strengthen-Our-Schools grant program\* to support teacher residency programs, provide additional training for current teachers, and attract student teachers to placements in high-need districts. Funds would help to cover costs of tuition, resident salaries, mentor teacher incentives, and facilities or infrastructure for a distance learning classroom within the school for onsite coursework and practical learning. Allowable uses of funds would include:
  - a. Residency licensure programs for paraprofessionals working in a school. These programs prepare future teachers to meet the unique needs of the children and youth in the district and school in which they are already working. They can support recruitment of bilingual teachers, special needs educators, and a generally more diverse education workforce to match the diversity of the students they serve.
  - b. Additional coursework for certified teachers seeking licensure in another field. This would help to address teacher shortage in rural communities where teachers often have to teach more than one subject area.
  - c. Additional credit requirements needed by teachers to meet requirements to teach dual- and concurrent-enrollment programs.
  - d. Housing supplements or special housing programs to support prospective teachers who complete their student teaching placements in high-need districts.
- \* A portion of the Strengthen-Our-Schools program funds would be specifically designated for **addressing teacher shortage challenges in rural school districts**.
2. Authorize the Education Department to create a national database of qualified<sup>1</sup> mentor teachers who can provide student teacher supervision. This would give teacher preparation programs (TPPs) access to the resources they would need to allow teacher candidates to complete their student teaching in areas where they have better access to affordable housing options (i.e. staying with family or friends). It would also help to diversify student teaching experiences by building an infrastructure in rural and urban areas that may not otherwise be options for student teachers because of the geographic location of their program.
3. Formally recognize teaching as a part of Career and Technical Education to encourage an earlier start to pathways for becoming a teacher and allow schools access to a broader range of funding to support dual-enrollment programs in education.

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<sup>1</sup> A qualified mentor teacher would be an experienced, licensed educator who meets a **minimum** set of qualification standards, as set out by the Department of Education. Each database entry would be structured as a mentor profile and would include basic information on the mentor's education background and professional experience, a description of the education contexts within which they feel most comfortable mentoring, and a teaching philosophy statement. It would be up to individual institutions to contact potential mentors for any further information that they would require.